

1st BART dope ring

AUG 19 1978

By PEARL STEWART

Staff Writer

A team of BART police, using undercover agents, ended a year-long investigation into a suspected employee narcotics ring yesterday by arresting at least 10 people and issuing warrants for nine others.

BART assistant manager Robert Gallaway and Capt. Tom Sowell, head of the transit system's special investigative unit, said the ring ran an elaborate in-house operation selling cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine and PCP to other BART employees.

"We became aware of a drug situation within the district nearly two years ago," Gallaway said, "so we formed a special investigative unit within our police force to look into it."

Gallaway said 21 employees from two Eastbay counties were suspended from the transit system pending the outcome of the arrests and internal hearings next week.

Six of those suspended did not have warrants against them. They were suspended for "using drugs, including alcohol, on the premises."

BART officials would not release the names of the suspects, but said they worked as train operators, station agents and maintenance employees.

The officials would not specify whether the suspected operators were charged with using drugs while running trains.

Sowell said three undercover agents were hired and trained as regular BART workers. They worked as a train operator, station agent and janitor and bought drugs from the suspects with BART funds.

He said \$10,000 was spent to

buy the drugs, from \$50,000 to \$55,000 on the overall investigation.

Most of the purchases were "relatively small," Sowell reported. He said the largest quantity bought at one time was a half-ounce of cocaine for \$1,000.

Sowell said he had "no way of knowing" if the drug traffic among BART's employees was halted by the arrests.

"That's like looking in a room full of people and deciding just by looking at them who smokes and who doesn't," he said. "We just don't know."

BART identifies 14 in big dope ring

Employee

AUG 20 1978

OAKLAND — At least five of the BART workers who have been accused of taking part in an elaborate, in-house drug ring are train operators and at least three are station agents, BART officials said Saturday.

The officials identified 14 of the accused workers but refused to say whether they suspected them of using drugs while running trains or otherwise working.

They did charge, however, that

the ring was trafficking in cocaine, marijuana, hashish, PCP and amphetamines on BART property.

Twenty one BART workers have been suspended in the case. Of these, 14 have been charged, and one is being sought.

An 18-month investigation by three investigators — hired especially to penetrate the alleged drug ring — cracked the case.

One worked as a station agent, another as a train operator, the third as a janitor.

Using BART money, the three bought \$10,000 worth of drugs.

Of the 21 BART workers suspended from work, 14 were actually arrested. Six more were suspended for "using drugs, including alcohol, on the premises," and one other person is still being sought.

BART officials identified the five train operators as Roberto Roy Villalobos of Union City, charged with selling cocaine and marijuana; Lonnie Cason of Livermore, charged with furnishing various drugs; James W. Wells of El Cerrito, charged with selling marijuana; Katherine J. Rodrigues of Hayward, charged with furnishing marijuana; and Calvin S. Chew of Oakland, charged with furnishing marijuana.

The three station agents are Daniel Dawkins of Richmond, Rafael H. Acevedo of San Francisco, and Joseph N. Romero of San Francisco.

Dawkins and Acevedo were charged with furnishing marijuana, Romero with selling it.

The others charged:

- Ruth Ann Stack of Oakland, a mechanic, charged with selling marijuana and hashish.

- Richard Allen Keefe of Union City, a mechanic, charged with selling amphetamines.

- Clement Tellez of Hayward, a mechanic, charged with selling marijuana.

- Hershall Trotter of El Cerrito, a mechanic.

- James Lawrence Franz of Richmond, charged with selling cocaine.

- George Cain of Richmond, charged with offering cocaine for sale and possessing marijuana.

All face arraignments in Municipal Courts in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Mateo counties, as well as in San Francisco. In addition, all face internal hearings this week.

BART train operator AUG 22 1978 surrenders to police

Berkeley—The last of 15 BART employees charged with operating a drug ring surrendered to police here yesterday.

He is a train operator, Edmund Bally, 35, of Hayward, charged with selling narcotics.

The arrests began Friday, after 18 months of investigation by BART police and undercover agents.

Six of the workers have been accused of taking part in an elaborate in-house drug ring involving

train operators and station agents.

The investigation by three investigators—hired especially to penetrate the alleged drug ring—cracked the case.

Using BART money, the three undercover investigators spent \$10,000 buying drugs while posing as a train operator, station agent and janitor.

The men were charged with trafficking in cocaine, marijuana, hahish, PCP and amphetamines on BART property.

'BART's drug bust aimed at unions'

AUG 24 1978

by Pearl Stewart
Staff Writer

Oakland — BART officials called it a drug bust, but some others inside the transit system—including alleged "traffickers"—claim it also involved union busting.

They asserted that last week's highly publicized arrest of 15 employees charged with selling or providing drugs to other employees was part of an attempt to oust "troublemakers" in the two unions that represent BART workers.

Most of those arrested, they noted, were employees at BART's Richmond facility which, as one said, "has always caused BART management the most trouble in terms of union activity."

Just recently, the safety chairman of one of the unions—Richard Allen Keefe—forced a shutdown of the repair shop there because of allegedly hazardous conditions. He was among those arrested.

Also, they pointed out, one of those suspended for allegedly using drugs on BART property is

chairman of the union's affirmative action committee and publishes an anti-management newsletter.

Ed Britt, one of the undercover agents hired by BART police to pose as an employee and investigate the alleged drug ring, was elected shop steward of one of the BART unions.

"I couldn't believe it when the police said the charges against me had come from Ed Britt," said one BART employee who was arrested. "As shop steward, he was always outspoken against management and encouraged us to criticize BART management.

"And he was always asking for dope. I thought the guy was a junkie."

The employee insisted, however, that he had never provided Britt with dope.

BART spokesman Mike Healy claimed, however, that "there was absolutely no connection at all between his police activities and his role with the union."